

ARLINGTON PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINTUES

July 14th, 2020

The Town of Arlington Park and Recreation Commission came to order for its online virtual meeting via Zoom on Tuesday July 14th, 2020 at 7:03pm.

Commission Members: Leslie Mayer, Jen Rothenberg, Shirley Canniff, Phil Lasker, Scott Walker, and associate member, Sarah Carrier were present. Recreation Director Joe Connelly and Program Supervisor Zachary Vaillette were also in attendance.

Anticipated Speakers: Henry Fenollosa

Members of the Public: Adam Glick, Alan Jones, Amanda Wright, Catherine Fenollosa, Charles Durst, Chris Monks, Chris Robson, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Erin Fera, Jennifer Waldrop, Jeremy Gregory, Jonathan Koopmann, Josh Fenollosa, Joy Ahearn, Julia McLaughlin, Kristen Faiola, Jake Faiola, Lenard Diggins, Lily Chung, Mads Schmidt, Michael Ratner, Owen Curtin, Sarah Gurney, Seth Hamlin, Todd Spivak, & Lauren Benedetti.

Preliminary Matter: Leslie Mayer, Park & Recreation Commission Chair, took formal attendance via a roll call. Ms. Mayer read a statement pertaining to Governor Baker's Public Meeting Law change due to COVID-19 regarding virtual meetings. Meeting business ground rules and procedures were also covered by Ms. Mayer.

Open Forum – Public Comment

N/A

Mountain Biking Use of Crusher Lot – Presentation Henry Fenollosa

Henry Fenollosa presented to the Commission and members of the public who were in attendance on why the Crusher Lot property should incorporate an official bike park. Mr. Fenollosa stated that Arlington is a cycling community. Mountain biking is a growing sport. The creation of an official bike park would provide a space for riders to learn new abilities and progress their skills, bring in local tourism, keep riders off of unapproved land, and would provide an opportunity for new Recreation Department programs/camps. Some members of the community have shown great interest in this, as a local survey has had over 1,000 responses.

Mr. Fenollosa suggested this could be created in accordance to the 2015-2020 Open Space Recreation Plan. Numerous aspects and goals of the Open Space Plan are met by mountain bike trails. Major goals and actions outlined in the plan included an increase in all types of recreation trails and investing in recreation/conservation areas that are near residential parts of Town. This is in addition to stating that the Town should pursue new recreational opportunities based on community preferences. There are many children already interested in mountain biking in the neighborhoods around Crusher Lot. Public Open Space Land Uses are open to both residents and non-residents, which would allow out of Town residents to use the trails.

An additional goal outlined in the Open Space Plan was to increase public awareness, accessibility, and community stewardship of the Town's open spaces and recreational facilities. Mr. Fenollosa is a Boy Scout and believes that groups like his would take ownership in care and preservation of the trails/property.

Mr. Fenollosa then shared a PowerPoint and discussed what his supporters and he are proposing. The Crusher Lot would become a more designated place to ride bikes. This would include the creation and installation of bike trails, jumps, and other features. These additional features would not however interfere with other users on walking trails or dog walkers. If official mountain biking trails are to be approved, Mr. Fenollosa is requesting that a budget be approved to build and maintain the trails. He then went over the current trails on the property and their usage which included unofficial riding trails and walking trails.

He then outlined a map that included proposed trails that could be added in the future if approved, each with different levels of difficulty and usage.

This allows there to be something for everyone, for riders of all different ages and abilities. Trails types, features, and other proposed items outlined included:

- Jumps and other wooden riding obstacles
- Technical trails- natural obstacles, trees, rocks, roots
- Pump track- closed track with jumps, rollers, and berms to help riders generate speed. Proposing a dirt pump track
- Skills parks- Different technical features and drops for riders of all abilities to work on skills
- Proposing picnic gathering area in cleared area for bikers and walkers to relax and come together
- Signage- Entrance with rules. Other signs with trail levels, etc.

If this were approved, the project would be set into phases and have a proposed timeline. Mr. Fenollosa stated that they would first need to design and create signage, then be given information on what would be allowed. The following actions would be to design and create signage, establish a volunteer group, and work with the public for feedback. Mr. Fenollosa also covered an example of a proposed timeline for the project.

Ms. Mayer thanked Mr. Fenollosa for his knowledge, enthusiasm, and efforts to explain this to Commission. The topic of mountain biking trails at Crusher Lot is something that has been brought to the Commission in the past. A mountain biking task force will be created and (2) Commissioners will serve on this. At this time, Ms. Mayer asked Commissioners to share their feedback on the proposal.

Mr. Walker thanked Henry for his efforts and willingness to present to the Commission. Mr. Walker does see the value of creating a space in Arlington that is more designated to mountain biking. He stated that he would be open to discussing the possibility of a pump track, as it is a fun and exciting feature. If this is to move forward, Mr. Walker stated that careful consideration will need to be taken into account and when trails are laid to protect existing trails and natural vegetation. Mr. Walker believes that this is a great jumping off point if the project is ever to occur.

Mr. Lasker believes Henry did a fantastic job, with a great deal of time and effort invested into the project. Mr. Lasker is a mountain biker himself and is very passionate about this potential project. As an up and coming sport, he would love to see a designated space for mountain biking and likes how younger members of the community are interested in this proposal. Mr. Lasker stated that he is in 100% support of this potential project.

Ms. Canniff also stated that Henry did a fantastic job. She believes that the Crusher Lot is the ideal location for this, as it is an underutilized space with unique terrain. Ms. Canniff believes that budgeting may be a concern, but believes that there is a possibility for funding if this is approved. She stated that this may not be to the scale which is being proposed, but there is opportunity to create something for community members interested in the sport.

Ms. Rothenberg also thanked Henry and applauded him on his efforts to organize the community to get onboard with this idea. She believes that if this were approved it can be not only an opportunity to bring together young individuals in Town, but will allow them to create and manage something of their own. Ms. Rothenberg stated that the property needs some cleaning up. Ms. Rothenberg believes that Adam Glick could be a great resource and looks forward to seeing this proposal move forward.

Ms. Carrier is excited for the potential of this project and believed the proposal looked great. She stated that this is a new form of recreation in Arlington that is not already provided. Ms. Carrier is hoping the current community can help the sport grow and watch/manage the property overtime if this is approved.

Adam Glick, President of the New England Mountain Biking Association, was present on the call. Mr. Glick provided his feedback on the proposal. Mr. Glick first met Henry in the Crusher Lot this spring and has been aware of the current trails existing there for a while. He has been an Arlington resident since 1994 and has been involved in mountain bike community since early 2000's. Mr. Glick currently teaches courses on sustainable trail building and added that the entire mountain biking community is behind sustainability.

Mr. Glick believes that it is important to have shared use trails and advocated for this. Some of the trails in the proposal are biking specific trails. Many of the trails they design for mountain biking tend to be loved by runners as they find them appealing. Mr. Glick added with Crusher Lots proximity to the Middle School, there is the possibility of having bike skills programs or as a part of the curriculum. He believes that youth mountain biking has exploded in last 5 years.

NEHSCA, New England High School Cycling Association, offers mountain biking which Arlington does not currently have a team for. The goal of this association is to create an environment for equal and fun participation, with races occurring in the fall season. Mr. Glick believes the goal of a park at the Crusher Lot is skills building focused and not a regional riding destination. He stated that pump tracks can be used by individuals of all ages like the one in Westford. This was created as a part of a community construction project. Mr. Glick also would like to point out that if this were to occur, it should not limit the use for biking on other trails in Town. There are currently great deals of individuals that use Great Meadow and Menotomy Rocks Park for Biking. Mr. Glick does not want THE Crusher Lot to become the only approved place for riding in Arlington. He believes this potential project will generate a lot of interest in mountain bike community within Lexington, Arlington, Belmont, and the surrounding area.

Mr. Glick stated that trail grants are available through NEMBA. He believes volunteers will need to be active in the building and maintenance of this project if approved, with 95% of trail work at other location typically occurring by volunteers. Ms. Mayer asked Mr. Glick if he would be interested in potentially joining the task force group, which he shared his interest in. Ms. Mayer said this has been a very positive discussion, but there are always individuals with different perspectives. She stated that this is the reason why the Commission wanted to create a task force which will allow them to explore this possibility and gage all feedback/thoughts/and concerns. Ms. Mayer stated she would be interested on having Mr. Fenollosa on the task force as well.

Mr. Connelly also believes that Henry did a great job on the presentation and commends him for referencing the Open Space Trail. Mr. Connelly referenced that this proposal is similar to the Arlington/Belmont Crew and the Dog Park proposals. These were brought to the Commission numerous times and were uphill battles. Members of community shared a great deal of feedback in terms of if these projects should occur and where. Mr. Connelly also added that this was similar to the creation of the bocce court and community gardens in Town as they started with the expression of an idea. Mr. Connelly recommends getting a task force together with the (4) individuals outlined above and other individuals. He would be happy to have someone who has concerns with this to be on the group, so they can see all sides. Mr. Connelly asked all individuals who wanted to share feedback or had interest in the task force to reach out to him directly via email. He believes the proposed timeline for the project may be aggressive, but steps are there.

Ms. Mayer stated that feedback so far has been in favor, but is looking for a variety of perspectives on the proposed project especially from abutters and neighbors.

Erin Fera stated that she is frustrated with the direction the Crusher Lot is heading as an abutter to the property. There has not been any conversation about this potential project until now. Ms. Fera stated she only knew the Commission Meeting was taking place because a neighbor told her. She stated that her property is near the trail head and that her children play in the woods. She stated that there are a lot of problems in the woods and is frustrated. Ms. Mayer stated that this is only the start of the discussion and nothing has been decided yet. The Commission is getting the task force group together so that they can discuss the possibility of the project occurring. Ms. Mayer encouraged Ms. Fera to reach out to Mr. Connelly if she is interested in being a part of the task force.

Alan Jones owns a property that is abutting the Crusher Lot. He stated that he has been using and walking through the woods there for 45 years. Mr. Jones first wanted to express that he believed Henry did a terrific job presenting the proposal as it was professional and well prepared. He then noted that in the petition for the potential project, it was stated that walking trails would not be impacted. Mr. Jones stated that the Open Space Plan lists the Crusher

Lot as a passive walking space. Mr. Jones shared several other points of feedback. He believes that limits should be placed on usage if this is ever approved. This would include the number of allowed riders, parking restrictions, times of day, and limits to non-residents. Mr. Jones stated that dog walkers, toddler groups, and school groups frequently use the property. He has concerns that there may be collisions with individuals using the trails. Mr. Jones believes that Menotomy Rocks Park may be a better location for a biking park. He believes that he will be personally affected if this project is to occur, as it will have a major impact on the natural vegetation and wildlife. Question if this would be a changed use of the space and if it would need to be voted on at Town Meeting. He also questioned who would manage and maintain this if this is to occur. Mr. Jones also expressed frustration as neighbors were not notified that this proposal was being brought to the Parks and Recreation Commission, in addition to trees already being cut within the property.

Ms. Mayer stated that she hopes that Mr. Jones reaches out to Mr. Connelly to express these concerns and that he has interest in being involved in the task force group. Ms. Mayer stated that nothing has been decided and that this is just a proposal. She hopes that everyone can be a part of the conversation regarding this. Mr. Connelly asked all individuals interested in serving on the task force to reach out by next Tuesday.

Tree Gifting Request Menotomy Rocks Park – Christine Wilson

A tree gifting request to plant a tree at Menotomy Rocks Park was received. The tree looking to be donated has already been approved by the Town's Tree Warden, although a location has not been determined. Once the Tree Warden selects a location, he will mark it so the Commission can see the location before planting. Ms. Canniff stated that the story behind the tree gifting was amazing and celebrating a 50th anniversary. She believes this will be very nice for the family.

Ms. Mayer asked the Commission to vote on approval of the tree gifting so that they can move forward with the process and select a location if approved. Ms. Canniff made motion to vote on this matter, which was 2nd by Ms. Rothenberg. This motion was approved by Commissioners, 5-0.

Correspondence Received: Susan Elmore (North Union Project)

Susan Elmore requested that more proper notifications be sent to abutters regarding construction projects. This is specific to the North Union Project. Individuals in the neighborhood were involved in the design process, but would have liked more notice about the construction and its timeline. Ms. Rothenberg stated an effort was made to make this known to the community, as it went out through the Town's channels. It was noted that not all community members use social media or are a part of a Recreation email chain. These concerns were related to that construction started without any noticed and had nothing to do with the design phase of the project. It was stated that there should have been more notice about start date. Mr. Connelly stated that signage on the project has been placed on the property, which will be the normal process for construction projects moving forward.

Commission Organization FY 21

Chair, Vice Chair, Committee Liaisons

Ms. Mayer stated that this is the first Park and Recreation Commission Meeting in FY 21. According to the Commission's protocols dating back to 2015, the Commission Chair holds their position for a (2) year term. Ms. Mayer stated that this will be her 2nd year of her term. Typically, the Vice Chair should be the person moving into position next. In order of the protocol, Mr. Lasker is the most recent member who has not served in the Chair position yet.

CPA and Open Space Committee

Ms. Mayer is also currently the liaison to CPA. The Open Space Committee is preparing to do the next scheduled open space plan soon. Input from the Commission and Recreation Department is essential for this. Mr. Canniff served as the last liaison to the Open Space Committee. Commission Members serve as representatives to other Town Boards/Committees as well, but not to the frequency that a liaison would. Board of Selectman and Finance liaisons are needed situationally.

The CPA and Open Space Committee require appointments from the Parks and Recreation Commission. Ms. Mayer noted that it is critical to have an individual highly involved in the Open Space Plan. Goals and issues change over time for departments and this must be noted in the plan. Ms. Canniff stated that she cannot commit to this role again. Ms. Carrier asked what the commitment is like when serving in one of these two liaison positions. MS. Mayer stated that the commitment is attending monthly meetings and that the summer months are usually taken off. The Open Space Committee is coordinated by the Planning Department and is made up of individuals include members from the Conservation Commission, a DPW representative, a Cemetery Commission representative, other Town Employees, and several Selectperson community appointees.

Mr. Lasker asked where the Commission was at in regards to filling the open Associate Commissioner space. Mr. Lasker believes that with the several projects currently occurring, having an additional Commissioner could be beneficial. As a landscape architect, Mr. Lasker believes that he can provide valuable input to the Open Space Plan. He stated that he is interested and willing to serve as the liaison to the Open Space Committee. Recreation Department Program Supervisor, Zachary Vaillette, shared that he would be interested in serving in this role if allowed. Mr. Connelly stated that he will be looking in to see if Mr. Vaillette can be involved in this process, even as a backup for Mr. Lasker. Ms. Rothenberg stated interest in learning more about the CPA liaison role. It was determined that Ms. Rothenberg will serve as Ms. Mayer's backup for the CPA.

Capital Project Update- Joe Connelly

a. Lussiano Playground

Mr. Connelly stated that mobilization and demolition have begun for the project. He received a number of phone calls regarding concerns that no tree protection has been put in place yet. The bid included the costs for tree protection and the contractor has been informed of this. He stated they will be installing material tomorrow to protect the existing trees and root systems.

Mr. Connelly noted that he did receive a change order for the guard rail, which they will be moving forward with. Ms. Rothenberg and Mr. Connelly met with neighborhood representatives recently to share information on the process and how they will be involved moving forward. Mr. Connelly plans on keeping them updated regularly. He stated that the accessible pathway coming off of North Union Street will need to be altered due to an existing irrigation system. The landscape architect was not aware of the proximity of this irrigation system to the planned path during design. Mr. Connelly also stated that he has asked Don Vitters if he would like to be involved with the project as a consultant to provide feedback. Ms. Rothenberg stated that she would like to stay involved as well.

b. Reservoir Phase II & Pilot Path Project

a. Beach Access for Summer of 2020

Mr. Connelly stated that there has been no change regarding the electrical pole work. This has been a back and forth process between Verizon and Eversource for weeks. If this can't be resolved, he will be moving forward with getting Community Relations involved. The new system needs to be tested by the contractor and this cannot happen until the power issue is resolved. Until the Commission accepts the project after the system is tested, the technical owner of the property is the contractor.

The topic of possibly reconstructing the fence around pump house was proposed. However, there are concerns opening the beach area as the water is at a level where individuals can swim within the berm. They will need to wait until the water is lowered until this area can be opened to the public. Mr. Connelly will ask J.J. Phelan about moving fence early before Town accepts the project.

In regards to the pilot path at the Reservoir, Mr. Connelly is working on a letter to send to the Lexington Conservation Commission which will outline the new plans/new location of the path that KZLA is working on. He is hoping that this will be approved and that no further changes will be needed. The Playground Task Force meeting occurred last night. The conversation was

positive and on point. The group is looking forward to reviewing the preliminary options that KZLA puts forward.

b. Filtration Boxes Public Art

The topic of placing public art on the filtration boxes located within the water of the Reservoir was discussed. Jim Feeney contacted Cecily Miller of the Arlington Public Arts regarding the potential of public art being located at the Reservoir. However, this was never discussed at any meeting. It appears that no public process was followed and that someone was just asked to create a design plan. Ms. Mayer stated the Commission may be willing to go through the process to have art but believes they need to determine what they are looking for first. If public art is going to be installed, it needs to fit in with the theme and flow of the entire project. Mr. Connelly and Ms. Rothenberg both agreed with and want the Art Commission to follow the process for any project moving forward. Ms. Rothenberg believes the Commission should wait to move forward and committing to this project. Mr. Connelly will reach out to let them know they are going to hold off on this matter for now.

c. Rink ADA Improvements

Mr. Connelly state that the Rink ADA Improvements at the Ed Burns Arena are going well and will be completed by the end of July.

d. Rink Refrigeration & Snow Melt Pit

Independent Mechanical will have their work completed and will be ready to begin placing ice on Monday, which is a week earlier than the Department requested. Mr. Connelly also noted that funding for the proposed new snowmelt pit has been secured, which will save Recreation in energy and water costs.

e. Robbins Farm Park Outfield

Mr. Connelly met onsite with the contractor and Brian Mount. This meeting was to discuss a maintenance plan for the turf including frequency, times, and chemicals amounts for treatment. The contractor was trying to incorporate software being used as part of the maintenance plan. Mr. Connelly requested just the plan to be sent. It was estimated that it could possibly cost \$20,000 annually for this specific plan. Mr. Connelly would like to see if Prescription Turf Services has any recommendation on a maintenance plan. It was noted that this field and the turf there are different from others in Town. There is a need to be treated differently to keep it up to standards.

As a side note, Emily Sullivan shared dates regarding the Wellington project. Documents will be submitted on August 6th for the August 20th meeting. It was noted that a design meeting with DPW should occur prior to the August 6th submittal. The Park and Recreation Commissions next meeting is on July 28th. They will be looking for Ms. Sullivan to present before the project moves forward.

f. FY 22 Capital and ADA Upgrade Discussion

Mr. Connelly stated that Conservation has a number of questions regarding the turf field proposal at the High School. There are a number of concerns as they are in 100 foot buffer zone. The Commission will be meeting this week and it was noted that the plan has not been approved yet.

Submittal for FY 22 Capital and ADA Upgrades is approaching. Memos will go out in September and Mr. Connelly wanted to get this topic on the agenda to start thinking about the Commission capital requests for FY 22.

It was noted that they have not settled on a project yet. The playground study was completed to help provide information on work that needed to be done moving forward. There has been community pressure and discussion regarding adding a new turf field in Town. The Commission will be reviewing a variety of documents and information to discuss the best approach/need for projects moving forward.

Task Group Update

Town Wide Playground, Reservoir Playground, & Mountain Biking

It was noted that Ms. Canniff and Ms. Carrier will be serving on the Playground Task Force. Mr. Lasker and Mr. Walker will assist with the Mountain Biking Task Force. Both Ms. Rothenberg and Ms. Mayer will be serving on the Reservoir Playground Task Force. Mr. Connelly will be reaching out to Commissioners to inform them when their task force meetings will begin. Joe will reach out to start meeting on these.

Summer Programming Update

Arlington recreation is preparing to offer a (4) week program this summer that is similar to our traditional Club Rec program for students entering grades K-6. This program will be called the **Summer on Summer Street Program**. Participant registration will be weekly with a max of (40) participants per week. In addition, the Summer on Summer Street will only be a (4) day program this year and will meet, Monday-Thursday. This program is NOT scheduled to meet weekly on Fridays. Summer on Summer Street will ONLY be offered on a Friday if a day is cancelled due to inclement weather during that specific week. This program will begin in (2) weeks on July 27th and a majority of the programs staff will be individuals who also work within the department's Kids Care Programs. Program dates are outlined below.

Week 1: July 27th – July 30th (Monday-Thursday, 8:30am-3:00pm, times vary by assigned group)

Week 2: August 3rd – August 6th (Monday-Thursday, 8:30am-3:00pm, times vary by assigned group)

Week 3: August 10th – August 13th (Monday-Thursday, 8:30am-3:00pm, times vary by assigned group)

Week 4: August 17th – August 20th (Monday-Thursday, 8:30am-3:00pm, times vary by assigned group)

The Thompson Spray Park has been opened for (2) weeks and the operation has been going well. There are dozens of individuals using the facility daily. The hours of the facility are 11:00am to 6:00pm, (7) days a week.

Approval of Minutes – June 30th, 2020

Ms. Mayer brought up approval of meeting minutes for the Commission's Meeting on June 30th. Ms. Rothenberg made the motion to approve the Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes for June 30th. Ms. Canniff seconded this motion. Ms. Mayer asked for a roll call vote, approving the minutes (5-0).

Comments & Items for Future Meetings

Future meetings next meeting July 28th

- Field Block Scheduling
- Public Hearing Res Phase 2 will begin at 6:00pm
- Wellington Project
- Budget Review COVID-19 Impacts

Ms. Rothenberg stated that she is looking for an update on how Businesses in the Parks is going. She is aware of two "rogue" groups that are offering boot camps on a regularly scheduled basis. She is concerned that these "rogue" groups or others will ruin it for everyone, as they are not going through the required process. Ms. Rothenberg requested that Mr. Connelly share the schedule of times and locations for businesses using parks, which he will do. Mr. Connelly noted that businesses that have submitted applications so far have been excellent. Multiple approved permits have been issued to a total of 10-11 different businesses/organizations. It was noted that Ali Carter has informed businesses within the community that there is a formal process that needs to be followed in order to use outdoor space. They must contact the Recreation Department.

Mr. Lasker motioned to adjourn the meeting. This motion was seconded by Mr. Walker. Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved by Commissioners, 5-0.

The Arlington Park & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes were respectfully submitted by Program Supervisor, Zachary Vaillette.